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THE UNITED STATES PATENT & TRADEMARK OFFICE

Applicants: Kenneth S. Wales et al. : Paper No:
Serial No. 10/615,971 : Group Art Unit:
Filed: July 9, 2003 : Examiner:
For: SURGICAL INSTRUMENT HAVING ARTICULATION JOINT SUPPORT
PLATES FOR SUPPORTING A FIRING BAR

INFORMATION DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

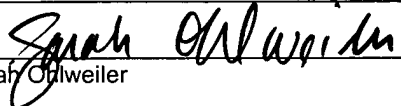
Dear Sir:

In accordance with 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.97 and 1.98, Applicants herewith submit certain patent references which the Patent and Trademark Office may wish to consider in examining the above-identified application. The references are provided below, and are also listed on the attached Form PTO-1449.

U.S. Patents	Issue Date	Inventor
US 5,673,840	10-07-1997	Schulze et al.
US 5,797,537	08-25-1998	Oberlin et al.
US 6,244,130 B1	06-05-2001	Milliman et al.

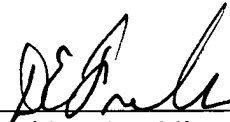
Pursuant to the waiver published in the Pre-OG Notice, dated July 11, 2003, no copies are provided herewith of U.S. patents cited. No representation is made or intended that a prior art search has been made or that no better art than the listed is available. It is respectfully requested that the information be considered by the Examiner and made of record in the present application.

Serial No. 10/615,971

CERTIFICATE OF MAILING	
I hereby certify that a copy of this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first class mail in an envelope addressed to Commissioner of Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450 on	
10 - 9	2003
	
Sarah Ortlweiller	

Respectfully submitted,

Kenneth S. Wales et al.



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9 Oct

, 2003

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Substitute for Form PTO 1449

INFORMATION DISCLOSURE STATEMENT BY APPLICANT

(use as many sheets as necessary)

Complete if Known

Application No. 10/615,971
 Filing Date July 9, 2003
 First Named Inventor WALES, Kenneth S. et al.
 Art Unit
 Examiner Name

Sheet 1 of 1 Attorney Docket No. END910-0511041

U.S. PATENT DOCUMENTS

Examiner initials	Cite No.	DOCUMENT NUMBER		Publication Date MM-DD-YYYY	Name of Patentee or Applicant of Cited Document	Pages, Columns, Lines, Where Relevant Passages or Relevant Figures Appear
		Number-Kind code ² (if known)				
		US-	5,673,840	10-07-1997	Schulze et al.	
		US-	5,797,537	08-25-1998	Oberlin et al.	
		US-	6,244,130 B1	06-05-2001	Milliman et al.	
		US-				
		US-				
		US-				
		US-				

FOREIGN PATENT DOCUMENTS

Examiner initials	Cite No.	Foreign Patent Document	Publication Date MM-DD-YYYY	Name of Patentee or Applicant of Cited Document	Pages, Columns, Lines, Where Relevant Passages or Relevant Figures Appear	T ⁶
		Country Code ³ -Number ⁴ -Kind code ⁵ (if known)				

OTHER PRIOR ART – NON PATENT LITERATURE DOCUMENTS

Examiner initials	Cite No.	Include name of the author (in CAPITAL LETTERS), title of the article (when appropriate), title of the item (book, magazine, journal, serial, symposium, catalog, etc.), date, page(s), volume-issue number(s), publisher, city and/or country where published	T ⁶

EXAMINER SIGNATURE _____ DATE CONSIDERED _____

EXAMINER: Initial if reference considered, whether or not citation is in conformance with MPEP 609; Draw line through citation if not in conformance and not considered. Include copy of this form with next communication to applicant.

¹ Applicant's unique citation designation number (optional). ² See Kinds Codes of USPTO Patent Documents at www.uspto.gov or MPEP 901.04. ³ Enter office that issued the document, by the two-letter code (WIPO Standard ST. 3). ⁴ For Japanese patent documents, the indication of the year of the reign of the Emperor must precede the serial number of the patent document. ⁵ Kind of document by the appropriate symbols as indicated on the document under WIPO Standard ST. 16 if possible. ⁶ Applicant is to place a check mark here if English language Translation is attached.